

USDA TRIBAL LEADER NUTRITION ROUNDTABLE
Hosted by USDA FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE, MOUNTAIN PLAINS REGION
TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2005; Journey Museum - Gallery, Rapid City, South Dakota

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VERNA BAILEY: Good afternoon. My name is Verna Bailey. I serve on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council, and I'm with the Health, Education and Welfare Committee. I try to work very closely with all the program directors that the committee has jurisdiction over. One of those programs is the program that MR. Gates has so professionally and efficiently run throughout the years, the Food Stamp Program on Standing Rock. I'm here on a journey for the tribes in the Great Plains area. I'm here to urge, on their behalf, the reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program, the Food Distribution Program, and others that benefit our Native Americans in this region.

We have come to recognize the good efforts of the people in the administration to make improvements. We have added frozen items for some point now. And one of the things that MR. Gates has done so well is work with the people in the districts, and we have eight of them on Standing Rock. Nutrition education, doing tailgate deliveries, and at the same time trying to encourage practices that contribute and improve nutrition for all families. That has been the greatest improvement, I believe, in getting to do the best that we can with what we have.

Although there are other resources on the reservation, it's very limited. We feel that the continued participation of our people in these programs would be beneficial to our children and families. We ask that you give careful consideration to the reauthorization of this legislation. And again, we would like to urge that at some time you take the time to come and visit us, and see for yourself, the kinds of things that are done in our homes, through participation of this program, taking the items that we receive and making the best use of those.

We also have the WIC Program that has greatly contributed to the well-being of our infants on the reservation. We all say that our children are sacred, and they come first in all that we do. Food is important, so that they can grow and become useful citizens in our community. We not only provide the food, but the learning experiences. And teaching them that water, along with food, is necessary so that we can live.

We ask that you work with us and help you seek this authorization from Congress. I know that most of us can step up to the plate and help you do what you think you have to do to get that done. Talk to us. Let us know what that is. I can only restate again the need for the continued existence of these programs on our reservation. We ask that you think about that and let us help you. Thank you.